

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BAGHDA 01919 280730Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
 USIA-06 OMB-01 COME-00 ACDA-07 SSM-03 MCT-01 IO-13
 EB-07 /100 W

-----280735Z 007153 /14

R 280548Z DEC 76
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3959
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T BAGHDAD 1919

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PFOR IZ
SUBJECT: TERRORISM, FOREIGN POLICY, AND INTERNAL TENSIONS IN IRAQ

1. SUMMARY: IRAQI REGIME IS FRUSTRATED BY CURRENT DEVELOP-
MENTS IN ARAB WORLD AND DISTURBED BY INCREASING TERRORISM AT
HOME. DESPITE THESE PROBLEMS AND INCREASED INTERNAL TENSION
WITH KURDS, IRAQI COMMUNIST PARTY AND BAATHI NATIONAL COMMAND,
IRAQI REGIME STILL SEEMS TO BE IN UNDISPUTED CONTROL. END SUMMARY.

2. IN AFTERMATH OF AIRPORT BOMBING, BAGHDAD REMAINS TENSE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BAGHDA 01919 280730Z

AS POLICE AND SECURITY SERVICES BRACE THEMSELVES FOR
FURTHER TERRORISM. LATEST APPARENT OUTRAGE WAS BOMB
EXPLOSION IN DOWNTOWN BAGDAD CINEMA ON EVENING OF
DECEMBER 23. GOI HAS NOT PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED THIS
LATEST ATROCITY BUT RUMORS SPREAD RAPIDLY THROUGH
DIPLOMATIC CORPS AFTER LOUD EXPLOSION WAS HEARD IN

DOWNTOWN BAGHDAD THAT EVENING. USINT SOURCE WHO HAS CLOSE CONNECTIONS WITH SECURITY ADMITTED THAT EXPLOSION HAD TAKEN PLACE IN CINEMA BUT SAID THAT NO ONE HAD BEEN KILLED. HE SAID GOI WOULD NOW IMPOSE STRICTER CONTROLS ON CINEMAS, CHECKING ALL PACKAGES AS PATRONS ENTER AND LOCKING DOORS AFTER SHOWING STARTS SO THAT NO ONE CAN LEAVE UNTIL PERFORMANCES ARE COMPLETED.

3. ANTI-REGIME IRAQIS IN LEAGUE WITH SYRIAN REGIME ARE CONSIDERED THE PROBABLE PERPETRATORS OF THE VIOLENCE. SYRIAN EMBASSY IN BAGHDAD IS UNDER PARTICULARLY HEAVY SURVEILLANCE ALTHOUGH IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT SYRIANS WOULD USE THEIR EMBASSY AS A BASE FOR COVERT OPERATIONS UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS.

4. WE CONTINUE TO HEAR REPORTS OF SMALL-GROUP INSURGENT ACTIVITY IN NORTH. OPERATIONS ARE APPARENTLY CARRIED OUT BY KURDISH IRREGULARS SUPPORTED BY DAMASCUS. USINT PRINCIPAL OFFICER WAS DENIED PERMISSION TO TRAVEL IN NORTH DURING NEW YEARS HOLIDAYS ALTHOUGH TWO OTHER USINT OFFICERS MADE SIMILAR TRIP IN EARLY DECEMBER.

5. THERE ARE ALSO SIGNS OF INCREASED TENSION BETWEEN THE RULING BAATH PARTY AND IRAQI COMMUNIST PARTY. IN REPORTING ON GOI STATEMENT ATTACKING SYRIAN REGIME FOR AIRPORT BOMBING, COMMUNIST PARTY PAPER, TARIQ AS-SHAB, LEFT OUT ONE PARAGRAPH WHICH CONTAINED A PARTICULARLY SCURRILOUS ATTACK ON SYRIANS. IN RESPONSE REGIME DEVOTED ENTIRE FRONT PAGE OF BAATH PARTY WEEKLY NEWSPAPER, AR-RASED, TO AN ATTACK ON THE ICP FOR ITS
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BAGHDA 01919 280730Z

ALLEGED FAILURE TO SUPPORT THE POLICIES OF THE IRAQI REGIME AND FOR ITS HABIT OF TAKING ITS CUES FROM FOREIGN POWERS.

6. ON DIPLOMATIC FRONT, REGIME IS ALSO TAKING SOME WELL EARNED LUMPS WITH EXPULSION OF FOUR IRAQI DIPLOMATS FROM IRAQI EMBASSY IN AMMAN FOR COMPLICITY IN TERRORIST ATTACK ON INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL AND WITH ENFORCED DEPARTURE OF IRAQI DIPLOMAT FROM UNITED NATIONS MISSION FOR ILLEGAL ARMS TRANSACTIONS.

7. BANKRUPTCY OF IRAQI FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD ARAB WORLD WAS FURTHER HIGHLIGHTED LAST WEEK BY ANNOUNCEMENT OF PLANS FOR POLITICAL MERGER BETWEEN SYRIA AND EGYPT. IRAQIS DO NOT LIKE TO PLAY ROLE OF ADD MAN OUT WHICH CONFLICTS WITH THEIR DEEP SEATED IDEOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL INCLINATION TOWARDS ARAB UNITY. SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN MOVE WAS PARTICULARLY BITTER ILL FOR IRAQI REGIME SINCE MERGER PLANS WERE

OBVIOUSLY RELATED TO SYRIAN AND EGYPTIAN ATTEMPTS TO MOVE IN DIRECTION OF A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL IN DEFIANCE OF IRAQI "REJECTIONIST" PHILOSOPHY.

8. OPEC CONFERENCE HAS ALSO STRAINED IRAQI RELATIONS WITH OTHER ARAB STATES, IN THIS CASE, SAUDI ARABIA AND THE UAE. ALTHOUGH GOI TOOK A CERTAIN CONSOLATION IN FINDING ITSELF, AT LAST, ON THE SIDE OF THE MAJORITY, THE DECISION BY SAUDI ARABIA AND UAE TO GO THEIR OWN WAY ON OIL PRICING WAS OCCASION FOR SOME ANGRY WORDS FROM GOI. IRAQI PLANNING OFFICIALS HAD COUNTED ON LARGER INCREASE TO HELP FINANCE THEIR DEVELOPMENT PLANS OVER NEXT FIVE YEARS. SHAIKH YAMANI WAS A PARTICULAR TARGET OF ABUSE.

9. TO ADD TO THEIR OTHER PROBLEMS, THERE APPEARS TO BE SOME INCREASE IN TENSION BETWEEN THE BAATHI NATIONAL COMMAND, DOMINATED BY MICHAEL AFLAK AND OTHER ANTI-SYRIAN-
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 BAGHDA 01919 280730Z

REGIME SYRIANS, AND THE REGIONAL COMMAND, CONTROLLED BY BAKR AND SADDAM HUSSEIN. WE HAVE HEARD REPORTS THAT THE REGIONAL COMMAND HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY ANNOYED BY EXTENT TO WHICH NATIONAL COMMAND HAS LIMITED THEIR FREEDOM OF ACTION BY TAKING PUBLIC POSITIONS ON SENSITIVE FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES BEFORE THE REGIONAL COMMAND HAS HAD TIME TO ACT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE IMPLACABLE HATRED FOR THE SYRIAN REGIME ON THE PART OF THE SYRIAN EXILES ON THE NATIONAL COMMAND HAS LIMITED THE REGIME'S FLEXIBILITY IN MANAGING THIS BITTER CONFLICT.

10. ALL IN ALL, THIS IS NOT A MERRY HOLIDAY SEASON FOR THE GOI. OUTLOOK IS FOR INCREASING FRUSTRATION ON PART OF IRAQI REGIME WHO HAVE UNWISELY LOCKED THEMSELVES INTO A NUMBER OF UNREALISTIC POLICIES AND WHO MAY NOW FEEL OBLIGED TO OPT FOR MORE DESPERATE MEASURES, SUCH AS TERRORISM, IN A VAIN ATTEMPT TO CARRY THEM OUT. TERRORISM WILL, OF COURSE, BREED COUNTER-TERRORISM, WHICH WILL, IN TURN, ADD TO THE REGIME'S ALREADY WELL DEVELOPED SENSE OF INSECURITY.

11. IN FACT, DESPITE RECENT BOMBING OUTRAGES, REGIME SEEMS TO US TO BE IN RELATIVELY STRONG POSITION AT HOME. POLICE AND SECURITY AGENCIES PERVADE ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE IN IRAQ AND SADDAM HUSSEIN IS INCREASINGLY TAKING OVER THE REINS OF POWER FROM AN AILING PRESIDENT BAKR. ACCEPTABILITY OF HUSSEIN TO LEADERSHIP OF ARMED FORCES CONTINUES TO BE THE MAJOR UNRESOLVED SUCCESSION ISSUE, BUT HUSSEIN IS A MASTER MANIPULATOR AND HAS HAD PLENTY OF TIME TO ESTABLISH HIS OWN NETWORK OF

INFORMERS WITHING THE ARMED FORCES AND MOVE HIS TRUSTED
SUPPORTERS INTO KEY COMMANDS. ALTHOUGH TERRORISM AND
COVERT WARFARE MAY NOW INTENSIFY, WE DOUBT THAT REGIME
IS IN SERIOUS DANGER, IN THE ABSENCE OF A SUCCESSFUL
ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON SADDAM HUSSEIN HIMSELF.

WILEY

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 BAGHDA 01919 280730Z

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SUMMARIES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BAGHDA01919
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760473-0742
From: BAGHDAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976128/aaaaagnb.tel
Line Count: 181
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 MAY 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <01 SEP 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TERRORISM, FOREIGN POLICY, AND INTERNAL TENSIONS IN IRAQ
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, IZ
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006